



From context to text and from text to context: Orwell in the contemporary scopic regime

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Abstract— *This article develops a critique of contemporary society through a close theoretical engagement with George Orwell's 1984, read not as a prophetic text but as what Georg Lukács termed realist fiction: a narrative form capable of grasping social totality. Drawing on critical theory, visual culture studies, and contemporary analyses of surveillance and algorithmic governance, the article proposes the concept of scopic regimes to analyze how visibility and occlusion are socially produced and normalized. By examining practices of diffuse surveillance, disinformation, the editing of truth, and the administration of fear, the article argues that contemporary societies increasingly resemble an anomalous social order in which the vulnerable are rendered invisible and residual populations are structurally managed. Rather than claiming a direct fulfillment of Orwell's dystopia, the analysis traces structural resonances between totalitarian mechanisms depicted in 1984 and current forms of market-driven, algorithmic, and media-mediated power. The article concludes by conceptualizing communication without communion as a defining feature of the present, one that undermines solidarity, weakens the moral contract, and calls into question the viability of human rights as the foundation of modern social life.*



Keywords— *Scopic regimes, dystopia, algorithmic governance, visual culture, communication without communion*

I. INTRODUCTION

The palimpsest of the unseeable in today's world can be explained by excesses of violence, poverty, marginalization, and pollution, for the disproportionality of its existence contradicts the euphoric dream with which modernity was born: the idea of a world united in its diversity under a universal equality. Today, by contrast, union is experienced through horror, terror, and the continuous, roaming, and perpetual war that guarantees it (Kundera 2004, 21). Elements that contribute to its perpetuation are the rhetorics of hatred and deficiency that abound in this era of global communication. The palimpsest of the unseeable generates the idea of the exhaustion of modernity and its resignation in the face of the impossible—precisely those excesses that kept growing until modernity resigned itself to being unable to overcome them.

Bauman says that *1984*, published in 1949 by Orwell, included all people within a surveillance system from which no one could escape; that is, everyone was immersed in the alienation sought by Big Brother. Today, he says, Big Brother consists in detecting people who do not fit, deporting them, or taking them to the place where they belong (2005, 169). In this sense, there exists a mass of residual people who are disciplined by institutions (asylums, prisons, refugee camps, urban ghettos) articulated with others (formal and informal) that manage residues through processes of exclusion (disappearances, violence, poverty, displacement, wars, organ trafficking, human trafficking, genocides). This allusion to the link between the Orwellian dystopia and contemporary social reality compels us to ask about the forms of surveillance in that novel and current forms (Arteaga 2014; Alev & Kocadaf 2019; Patil 2025). Forms of surveillance are creating social

profiles structured within regimes of vision that render certain groups invisible; that is, they force the occlusion of certain social group profiles. This kind of social occlusion is explained by the symbolism promoted by surveillance regimes. Thus, the unseeable—or the unseeables—derive from the ways in which judgments are defined according to scopic regimes.

This paper explores the social profiles that are being created from structures that ultimately project scopic regimes (Jay 2003) intended to discipline social forms by drawing the boundaries of the plausible, occluding the existence of subaltern and dominated social sectors—the occluded or the unseeables. For example, the developmentalist scopic regime founds a social imaginary that, by positioning development as an unquestionable goal, justifies forced displacements in order to locate projects in territories that are presumed to translate into development; amid this process, there are people who “get in the way,” which transforms them into excluded subjects of the system, into residual populations that must be managed. This component opens the door to neofascist policies of racial cleansing based on phenotype and to genocidal sweeps of entire regions to locate tourist enterprises. But what is most radical about the regime is precisely that it occludes the people who suffer displacement and genocide, for what matters is development.

Another example: the scopic regime founded on the supremacy of whiteness generates formulas for whitening territories through gentrification or public hygiene, in order to deal with the needy by expelling them from whitened territories; this same logic is observed in economic blockades against entire countries that end in long-term managed genocides, which generate international migration that is also managed as a residual population within the states through which migrants transit (Fernández 2022), in addition to the illegal sale of organs in markets characterized by class differences (Scheper-Hughes 2005). All these social consequences occlude residual peoples and persons who can be characterized as displaced and disappeared (Gatti 2010), poor (Cortina 2017), or ethnified peoples. The formulated scopic regime “dazzles” sight and gaze away from those who suffer the consequences of “getting in the way” of the hegemonic meaning of the scopic regime.

Hence, at least the scopic regimes of development and whiteness generate social forms that call into question the applicability of Human Rights for all, and with it the Enlightenment project of equality, liberty, and fraternity, since in this perspective or gaze upon the social, the dominant erect themselves as the privileged (claims such as right-wingers being better than left-handers, or assuming

oneself to be God’s chosen people) and those who hold development in their hands (transnational entrepreneurs articulated with powerful state governments). If this gaze becomes hegemonic, in Gramsci’s (2017) sense, we witness a vision that defines what is plausible and desirable, thereby making it socially visible (in terms of importance or relevance). Upon this world an excessive violence is erected, in which subaltern groups are the first to suffer it as occluded subjects through formulas that order what should be seen and what should be occluded. These visions translate into the “normalization” of social becoming.

II. METHODS

This article is a reflection on the type of society constructed from a global scopic system that provides the bases for systems of surveillance and cultural discipline that ultimately delimit what is seeable and what is occluded. The methodological strategy I follow is that of the cultural essay, which oscillates between anthropological reflexivity and the literary analysis of realist fiction as the dystopia that Orwell’s *1984* proposed as a social system. Lukács stated that realist (dystopian, I add) fiction seeks to “capture” the organizing meaning of the social totality (2010). In this essay I move from text to context to account for the general meaning—the ethos or scopic regime—that characterizes our contemporary society. An observable weakness is precisely the general sense I reach through this strategy; nevertheless, this generality allows us to see that today the crisis of modernity (human rights, equality in diversity, fraternity in the security of life, freedom as a right) is constructing new perspectives that occlude large social sectors that are being rendered vulnerable. With this warning, I do not wish the reader to conclude that Orwell’s dystopia has been fulfilled; rather, based on a reading of *1984*, I point to a set of factors that present striking similarities. I work from the 2005 edition of *1984* published by Editorial Tomo.

III. RESULTS

It is shown that a literary work can operate as an analytical device to understand historical and cultural processes, allowing the identification of structural trends that exceed the specific contexts of its production. Some examples: an analogy between Orwellian “doublethink” and certain contemporary dynamics of information circulation, where the coexistence of contradictory narratives and the loss of context hinder critical deliberation; although there is no longer a single information control center, multiple media devices participate in continuous processes of selection, simplification, and reinterpretation of collective memory; finally, a significant resonance is highlighted between the

permanent war of 1984 and the contemporary persistence of prolonged conflicts that contribute to the reproduction of structures of power and exclusion.

One assumption is the identification of an emerging scopic regime that organizes social visibility through digital technologies, surveillance devices, and symbolic production mechanism that determine who is recognized and who remains invisible. Thus, contemporary marginality is a structural outcome that turns certain groups into residual populations. Unlike the control depicted in 1984, current surveillance operates in a decentralized, algorithmic, and potential manner. Social control is exercised through the constant possibility of observation, classification, and sanction.

Another finding states that digital technologies not only mediate communication, but also reorganize the criteria by which individuals and groups acquire visibility, legitimacy, and recognition. In this context, one of the conceptual contributions is the formulation of the notion of “communication without communion”, understood as a paradox of hyperconnected societies that simultaneously experience a weakening of moral bonds, solidarity and responsibility towards others. Thus, the dynamics of surveillance, exclusion, communicative fragmentation, and global violence put modern ideals of equality, human dignity, and universal rights under strain.

IV. DISCUSSION

Scopic Regime: Visibility and Occlusion

By *scopic regime* is meant a social vision governed by parameters that users (the subjects who look) do not question—precisely because they are not critically reflected upon. It is a paradigmatic and hegemonic perspective embodied or “naturalized” in a shared worldview. It involves standardized ways of viewing, consuming, and producing images of our world (Jay, 2003). This vision emerges as a hegemon in dispute with different and subaltern visions that suffer and endure its consequences (marginalization, poverty, criminalization, displacement, extermination). What is at stake is the achievement of the intersubjective sense of the real; that is, moving beyond a local and immediate reading of life to incorporate the visions of powerful or hegemonic groups. Although this ideological or mental alignment is always contested by groups that find opportunities to dispute that sense, dominant technologies contribute to the hegemonic vision insofar as they filter symbols into local experiences. The gaze or perspective is subsumed within the worldview—that is the scopic regime—namely, the sharing of paradigmatic perspectives or ideas of power that feel crystallized to the extent that we imagine them to be shared

by everyone, which leads us not to question them. In 1984, Orwell’s novel, the possibility of escaping that mental alienation was impossible, given the omnipresent totalitarian system of Big Brother who sees everything; nonetheless, the possibility of disputing it does appear, even if it fails. In other dystopian novels, such as Disch’s *On Wings of Song* (1979; 2003), a certain emancipation can be achieved through fragmentation into parcels of interest framed by cultural or religious pluralisms that vie for power (Arteaga 2024), amid the state’s indifference.

As stated earlier, I will repeatedly draw on Orwell’s dystopia as realist fiction in Lukács’s sense—that is, as a narrative intention to encompass the social totality through social types and subjects or characters that illustrate an era while seeking to convey its moral stance. Realist fiction, following Lukács, stands in opposition to naturalistic description, which is constructed from a partial spectator of a contingent environment and fails to achieve an understanding of society as a whole (2010). In this respect, turning to Orwell’s dystopia does not mean that many of its propositions can be directly applied to present-day reality, although much of what Orwell posited as an imagined future social object (realist fiction), from within the society of his time, can today be found in different yet recognizable forms within those fictive speculations (Alec and Kokadac 2019; Patil 2025). Thus, drawing on Orwell’s realist fiction, I outline general features of our time’s moral social contract; this is what it means to move from text to context and from context to text.

In the narrative of Orwell’s novel, no one remains outside surveillance. This idea of totality corresponds to an omnipresent and totalitarian state that has been internalized in citizens’ mentalities through an everyday life built upon socializations permeated by fear and daily exercises devoted to hatred. Fear is grounded in the sensation of being permanently watched through telescreens, devices through which the programming of hatred exercises is also carried out. These mechanisms for administering collective fear and hatred operate through the Thought Police, who are always present in the surveillance of citizens. In our present time, telescreens are found in our mobile phones connected to the global network; however, the administration of fear is not constructed through them directly, but rather through the sense that anyone can be rendered vulnerable within a society that can see everything. It is not that one is always being watched, but it is clear that the algorithm that monitors us can be used in situations of vulnerability or criminalization, whenever those institutions decide to do so. This form of non-totalizing surveillance is diffuse in character (Alec and Kodakal 2019); that is, it constitutes an emergent scopic regime sustained by a fear of being surveilled, observed, and sanctioned by empowered actors,

generating a kind of behavioral domestication through exposure to being seen and tracked.

It is striking that a technology that emerged precisely to liberate individuals from the power structures of the market and the state (Baricco 2019) has resulted in a nearly Orwellian society—albeit one of diffuse surveillance—carried out through mobile screens and personal computers. Today, fear and the presence of the state of diffuse surveillance are reinforced by telescreens (the interfaces of our mobile phones) and by ever-present opportunities to deploy hatred at any moment (social networks designed for that purpose). I reiterate: fear; the sensation of diffuse surveillance (which can victimize someone by virtue of being observed and thus compelled to follow a disciplinary mandate); the use of technology (mobile phones and computers); and the practice of everyday hatred conducted through communication applications are the main organizers of contemporary collective meaning insofar as they define what can be seen and what must be occluded—and, more emphatically, who can be seen and who must be occluded.

In today's world, we see through mobile screens, and what we observe is a series of images without paradigmatic content, sustained by atomized truths produced according to the emitter without the need for argument or response. This form of communication without a paradigmatic foundation leads us to a world of the deaf—intense communication without communion. In it, we have lost what is common to humanity, that which would compel solidarity with the suffering other and the primary cooperativism that enabled the species' evolution—a key component of the sense of being at peace with oneself; this would be the moral pact insofar as one is in solidarity with the sufferer (Levinas 2002). Hence, this communication without communion can be described as the basis of the occlusion of the sufferer; that is, of subaltern and vulnerable groups spread across the planet whom we have ceased to look at, particularly in the twenty-first century.

The current scopic regime is experienced through the use of communication technology. It surveils through algorithms and, in doing so, deceptively provides a sense of freedom (Byung-Chul 2014). Added to this package is the equally deceptive illusion that just as one is free, so too are others. This uncritical extension of freedom generates a sense of equality extended to all insofar as technological use is concerned. This fact negates the sufferer and occludes subaltern groups. Projected within this generalizing illusion is communication without communion—that is, the applicability of a sense of freedom supposedly exercised by everyone. Now, if some lack it, it must be imposed on them at any cost. Typically, the groups that endure this imposition

are those marked by ethnicity and sexual diversity. This displacement compels us to consider the amount of egoism and cooperativism required to achieve a society of balanced coexistence capable of realizing a moral contractualism (Cortina 2012). Note that I do not speak of a society of human rights, international law, or Enlightenment principles; rather, I refer to a society of coexistence that allows everyone to realize their singularity within a world of universal rules, where each people and each person can deploy their way of being without being subjected to hegemonic relations that impede such realization.

Erasing History and Constructing Hatred

Both in the contemporary regime and in the Orwellian regime of the novel, history—being malleable—becomes an instrument for domesticating memory. In doing so, remembrance is used as an alienating device insofar as it functions as a marker of a single mode of thought: without fractures, without dislocations, flat and one-dimensional, in which everyone assumes their thinking to be original, without realizing—without being aware—that it is shaped there by the State or Big Brother, and here by the market and the mercantile actors who have captured the State. The resonances with *One-Dimensional Man* are striking, for the greater the serial production, the greater the cultural one-dimensionality (Marcuse 1968).

Orwell states that nothing survived, in that dystopian society, the effort to remember. The Ministry of Truth continuously edited history according to the interests of the totalitarian State. Editing truth—or history—actually means administering collective memory, for memory is a permanent exercise in giving meaning to the present in relation to becoming. Today we witness a world in which YouTubers and opinion-makers seek to rewrite history: former heroes are constructed as criminals, while contemporary pedophilic criminals highlight their actions by feigning heroism. History is occluded within narratives that minimize context, presenting themselves as images stripped of historical content and argument. In the novel, this emptying of meaning is embodied in the phrases “war is peace,” “freedom is slavery,” and “ignorance is strength,” all of them constructed as immutable truths whose infallible quality is sustained by the fear of questioning them. These are contradictions of meaning whose aim is to empty ethical content of its historical morality.

Today, propaganda has invaded the media, which strive to construct a scopic regime that occludes violence by presenting it as necessary in order to build societies in the image and desire of the hegemon. Television media have shown that truth is edited through agenda setting (McCombs 2006), orienting what is important as opposed to what is not; what is plausible as opposed to implausible;

what is desirable to see as opposed to what is not. Likewise, information and communication technologies operating on social networks have implemented bots (automated systems designed to replicate tasks on social networks) and trolls (individuals who intentionally generate conflict within digital networks), whose aim is to manipulate public opinion, even when this manipulation rests on deficiency and the editing of truth. As Merleau-Ponty (1986) interprets it, one does not see; one judges. This strategy takes advantage of that fact, for it is “mounted and slid” over judgment rather than over the supposed rational standpoint of the listener. Such actions have resulted in the deployment of social hatred through social networks.

In Orwell’s dystopian society there is a scheduled daily broadcast of the Two Minutes Hate via telescreens. Today, this manifests in the use of social networks—especially X—where permanent hatred is enacted through short texts that do not convey reasoned arguments but rather images of rancor and resentment. If in the novel it was once a week, today it occurs at every moment. At the convergence of editing truth within a context of collectivized hatred, freedom of expression can be destroyed while claiming to defend it (that is, defending the right to lie or to edit truth). In the Orwellian novel, audiences consistently produced individuals or personalities willing to allow themselves to be deceived. This component is a marked device in today’s society, which desires to be deceived by social networks. People do not wish to construct their own criteria, but rather to find in decontextualized texts and in images or memes elements that help them confirm their ideas, even when those ideas are mistaken or are the product of algorithmic deception.

This world of lies constitutes the global social context in which we live today and which was the staff of Orwell’s dystopian society; its foundation rested not on truth but on the confirmation that one’s own stubbornness was a truth—that is, if my atomized truth is confirmed in “some meme,” then it must be true. “Everything melted away into the mist once the past was erased, the erasure itself forgotten, and the lie became truth” (Orwell 2005, 82). The possibility of edited truth or collectivized falsehood rests on the opacity of the past, a plot organized by the Party. Today it is the market, and business elites embedded in State power, who are responsible for transmitting and ordering public opinion as the criterion of what must be seen, occluding the issues and social sectors that must be obscured and devalued. In the novel these were the proles; today they are the residuals (Bauman 2005; Cortina 2017).

“Inside his head there was not a single thought that was not a slogan” (Orwell 2005, 73). Everything suggests that today authenticity and originality are grounded in forms of

consumption of commercial brands and television advertising. The issue is alienation as the control of the mind: making people feel free when they are governed (Byung-Chul Han 2014); making them feel original when they aestheticize themselves through market slogans and products (Douglas 2008). In the novel, this was the result of the past and the external world being considered creations of the mind (Orwell 2005, 87)—a complete pragmatic subjectivism. Since the mind was controllable, the past could also be controlled. The new narratives that dispute the truth of events, that turn madmen into heroes and heroes into criminals, are an expression of the new world we inhabit. We are witnessing a world in which the criterion of reality is mediated by things and by virtual things (González Ortiz 2024; Foladori 2001).

Managing Fear in Anomalous Society

In the operation of the Thought Police, the family was part of the apparatus: anyone who deviated from the line of prescribed thought was forced back into it through torture or vaporization. Fear was the procedure through which alienated thoughts were maintained. “The usual procedure was simply that people who had fallen from grace disappeared and were never heard of again, without any information as to what had happened to them” (Orwell 2005, 51). The resonances of this passage are striking for several continents of the world today, as they lead to the idea of a kind of administration of residual humans—those who have fallen from grace, the excluded, the superfluous (Bauman 2005; Gatti 2010)—who are rendered vulnerable to disappearance. Orwell notes that disappearances were common, but certainty about whether people had died did not exist (Orwell 2005, 164). Today we witness this anomaly: the inability to provide calm and justice to people given the impossibility of mourning—that is, the impossibility of restoration (González Rodríguez 2014). It is an anomaly that prevents mourning precisely because there is doubt regarding the death of the disappeared.

This notion of the excluded, of residual populations, is already intuited in *1984* when it states that labor in the equatorial regions was not indispensable for the functioning of the global economy (Orwell 2005, 187). The step from being among the excluded, or under the administration of the residual, to becoming one of the disappeared is a small one. While the novel refers to a totalitarian state that encompasses everyone (including those who are expendable for labor), in the present, the administration of the excluded refers to the public management of those who cannot care for themselves—that is, those who are not necessary for capital accumulation (the unemployed, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.). They are administered through fear and the horror of disappearance.

Fear also has another face. “The children were horrible... the parents were afraid of their own children, and one of the worst things that happened to them was not being allowed to go to an execution” (Orwell 2005, 30–31). This is a society in which violence is normalized; its spectacularization makes this possible, since children found it entertaining to attend. In the fictional construction, primary relations between generations have been broken. There is also a destabilization of authority relations grounded in family statuses and roles. The girl who denounces her father, Parsons, because he said something against the Party in his sleep (Orwell 2005, 233) is emblematic. In the dialogue with O’Brien it is stated: “We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends” (Orwell 2005, 265). This statement is forceful: it aims to eliminate primary relations of interaction, community, and trust. Contemporary individualistic atomism may well be the social model globalization seeks to impose. To achieve this, it is necessary not only to destroy primary trust between generations but also between the sexes. This is what communication without communion entails (as developed by digital technology): that is, without community—the fundamental basis from which hatred can be exercised. Within this same escalation, fear functions as a disorganizing organizer of trust in others and as a structuring force of distrust aligned with Big Brother. In some sense, the society of intense contemporary violence brings us closer to this system of collective separation and individual pursuit of salvation and self-realization.

Yet despite the force exercised by Big Brother, the novel still allows us to imagine dissent—although without escape. In Orwellian social life, love, the primary basis of relations between the sexes, becomes the basis of torture that leads prisoners to discover their worst fears, driving them to betray themselves; this is the function of the Ministry of Love. If fear is sufficiently horrific, the only thing the tortured person desires is for it to happen to someone else, projecting the impossibility of empathy and solidarity. When there is horror, solidarity with the sufferer becomes impossible, since fear is constructed in the form of horror (Kundera 2004). This is the society of anomaly—that is, one in which there is no possibility of restoring the victim (González Rodríguez 2014). Today we are witnessing a society that has moved from anomie to anomaly; this is precisely what constitutes the weakening of the moral contract.

Happiness in Orwellian society translates into a complete hedonism achieved by questioning nothing. Whoever lives without asking, without questioning, will be the happiest

(the same formula proposed in *Brave New World* [2025], published by Huxley in 1932). Those who manage to be happy are those who do not question; those who do question are returned by fear and re-aligned with the norms dictated by the State. In today’s world, fear is the cultural organizer of the social: on the one hand, violence is horrific; on the other, the threatening gestures of powerful states are assumed as warnings by other states. The terror with which military actions are announced and the public spectacularization of violence ultimately organize society into a complicit silence born of fear of reprisals.

Institutional functioning in the Orwellian world imprisons Winston alongside common criminals, without distinguishing him as a political prisoner. It is assumed that everyone who arrives in prison is there for a reason; once inside, the nature of the offense or cause no longer matters—they become hostages of the system. This resonates with how prisons function today as spaces of confinement for people in tragic conditions; once inside, it no longer matters whether they will receive a sentence or remain perpetually under prosecution. Common prisoners fear nothing; political prisoners remain silent, afraid. Room 101 functions as the site of torture—that is, as the instance that orders a return to the channel of aligned thought. There, the existence of *el apando* (Revueltas 2014) is projected as an emblem of unspeakable torture.

Newspeak and Doublethink

Articulated with the erasure of history and, consequently, of memory—through the falsification or editing of truth—is *Newspeak*. Newspeak was intended to close off the possibility of thinking; it was designed to alienate. Once Oldspeak disappeared, every link to the past was broken (Orwell 2005, 30). This involved the synthetic use of words to limit the possibility of thought; the subjugation of language means limiting future thought (Alev and Kocadal 2019). Contemporary examples of Newspeak can be found in the use of social media, where argumentation and theoretical or political paradigms are sacrificed in favor of the spectacular impact produced by images and synthetic sentences assembled from small fragments of ideas. Often, syntactic compression forces the use of spellings that do not correspond to scholastic grammar; at other times, communication companies sanction the use of certain words according to unilateral and opaque criteria. Today, we must ask whether these synthetic ideas and emerging graphic forms succeed in narrowing the radius of mental action, as Newspeak did in Orwell’s novel. One empirically observed practice is that, at a book fair in Mexico, some publishing houses display classic novels with introductions written by public opinion figures from private media—that is, they seek to align interpretation with market opinion-makers.

The intention is to obstruct free reading in favor of a guided, muzzled one. Similarly, the use of synthesis without paradigm or argument corresponds to images, memes, or emoticons, whose meanings have become universalized and function as shortcuts for thought and symbolization.

Doublethink is articulated with the production of deficiency in order to control reality and domesticate the intersubjective sense of reality. In the novel, holding simultaneously—or keeping present—two contradictory ways of thinking—*war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength*, for example—are oxymorons constructed by the Ministry of Thought depicted in the novel. Today, this factor can be understood as a crisis of ideologies, in which individuals may hold positions of the left or the right without assuming the epistemological contradiction. This derives from the absence of historical sense and submission to slogans—that is, to the emptiness produced by orienting life according to advertising. Reasonable objectivity has yielded to emotional appeals. The possibility of this emergence stems from the lack of arguments and theoretical and political paradigms within which contemporary society operates. Examples include left- and right-wing ideologies that no longer differentiate party positions, a condition that opens the door to “atomized truths” on social media, where each synthetic statement is taken as an “individual truth,” out of context or within decontextualized textual formats. This factor indicates that contradiction is not exclusive to totalitarian regimes but also to democratic ones that seek to impose their point of view, their scopic system. The adulteration of the past consists in sustaining antagonistic opinions simultaneously.

In the novel, doublethink is an intentional deformation (by the Ministry of Thought, where Winston works, incidentally) of reality as it is processed in the minds of citizens. Today, this can be observed in intellectuals who have renounced truth and objectivity (as well as their reputations) in order to defend their economic interests and frameworks of privilege under regimes that allowed them to be critical while receiving rewards. It consists of denying the existence of reality while simultaneously enunciating an invented reality, in order to claim a convenient sense of reality; this is what it means for such intellectuals to deform reality. Audiences internalize this deformation in their minds in the key of discomfort. Information is used in a diffuse manner; its transparency is largely rhetorical, to the point that it becomes confusing.

There Is Always War. Today

One of the defining facts of the present is war, which appears as extended and permanent across all continents. While the central wars are those staged in Europe and Western Asia, Africa has endured wars (and famines) for

years (Gómez 2023); the conflict between North Korea and South Korea, as well as the violence linked to drug trafficking in the Americas, are examples of how wars have become “naturalized” insofar as they remain unresolved. The “naturalization” of war (and violence) becomes feasible in a world dominated by fear, hatred, adulation, and a perpetual social atomism in which truth is almost a personal device. Such a social profile fosters a mentality that values war over sovereignty.

This idea of the “naturalization” of a world at war with no possibility of resolution leads us to Orwellian geopolitics, in which three states exist in permanent war and cannot be defeated. This image shifts the discussion from text to context if we consider the contemporary emergence of a new world order in which three powerful states exist in a balance of deterrence against a potential nuclear escalation. In Orwell’s novel, those states fight to appropriate labor; today, wars are generated over raw materials and energy resources.

The three powers or states that govern Orwell’s world largely represent the ideologies we experience today, albeit with notable changes. For example, in Oceania the ideology of Ingsoc prevails, a kind of corporate system that could be applied to the Western Hemisphere; in Eurasia, Neo-Bolshevism, a renewed ideology that could be anchored to present-day Russia, albeit now capitalist; and in Asia, a Chimo term translated as the worship of death but perhaps better expressed as the annihilation of the self (Orwell 2005, 196)—that is, communism? Beyond these general correspondences, it is important to note that citizens of Orwellian Oceania are not allowed to know anything about the other ideologies; they are taught to condemn them as barbaric insults against morality and common sense (Orwell 2005, 196). While this is not directly verifiable today, it is a fact that many actors in public opinion and the entertainment industry use their fame to confuse and negatively persuade audiences about other socioeconomic systems through videos, condensed texts, memes, or images. It has been observed that YouTubers speak without paradigmatic argumentation about Russia or China, confining them to authoritarian caricatures that would appropriate even one’s socks or television. Propaganda “slides” over opinion-makers across social media as well as television and radio.

A key contemporary factor is the persistent sense that ideologies have been exhausted and that political parties have become “pragmatic weathervanes” seeking not social benefit but the privileges participation in political contests affords their members. The same can be extended to sociopolitical systems known as capitalism, socialism, and communism, since the corporate and financial world seems

to absorb the logics of all three socioeconomic systems. It is striking that in Orwell's world this fact appears so clearly when he refers to the three powerful states as follows: "In truth, the three ideologies can hardly be distinguished, and the social systems they support are the same. In all three there is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of a semi-divine leader, the same economy oriented toward perpetual war. Hence, not only can the three superstates not conquer one another, but they would gain no advantage if they did. On the contrary, they help one another by remaining in conflict" (Orwell 2005, 196). Returning from context to text, it seems that today the global order is maintained by fear of annihilating all that is human; hence, administered and perpetual war serves to keep society's structure intact—each powerful state with its region, and all states with their class privileges untouched.

In a world of perpetually administered war, what becomes most evident is the crisis of Human Rights. These critical experiences include imprisonment without due process; tortured prisoners; attacks on civilian zones; the intentional killing of children; public executions; generalized violence; a weakened moral pact; the incarceration of people based on skin color; the use of hostages for military and political purposes; mass deportations of populations; countries transformed into massive prisons; criminal elites; the loss of national sovereignties; organ trafficking justified through narratives of saving lives; and disputes over truth within an extremely polarized society. The resonances of *1984* are striking when we think about today's times of war and violence. These factors ultimately serve to further vulnerabilize the weakest. As argued in this work, the scopic regime now being constructed renders the vulnerable invisible insofar as they lie at the margins of elite interests. In this emerging new world order, the quality of Human Rights as the platform of the modern social pact is called into question, while the egoism of atomized elite self-interest emerges as the regime seeking to impose itself.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In Orwell's world, the Ministry of Peace plans war; the Ministry of Truth administers the lies; the Ministry of Love implements torture; the Ministry of Thought administers memory by altering the historical narrative; the Ministry of Plenty administers hunger. The images projected by this Orwellian world are those of an upside-down world, a feature already noted by Galeano (1998). This possibility can only be realized in a world of perpetual war.

The dominant mental state addressed in this text is controlled madness (Orwell 2005, 216), that is, functional schizophrenia (Binswanger 1956), which derives from a world that produces eccentricities—those who plan

violence and war from their dominant desks, or encourage it from the comfort of their (still) non-vulnerabilized regions—and melancholies sustained by the conviction of belonging to unseen groups, to minorities or to the poor who are not looked at because they do not matter to anyone. The contemporary scopic regime has placed historically vulnerable groups within the palimpsest of the unseeable. Where they were once cared for, they now no longer matter, for they are treated as untreatable and inevitable residuals, according to prevailing cultural frames of reference.

In today's world, subjected to advertising and to the editing of truth carried out by the media, and to the deceived feelings of freedom and authenticity that networks provide through algorithms, reality seems to coincide with each individual's mentality. The algorithm delivers precisely "what we were already thinking" into our minds. Hence, reality seems to dwell in our minds—not as an external factor but as a Berkeleian subjective expression (Pitcher 1983): reality exists only insofar as I think it. This same process of atomizing reality according to the mind that perceives it—of atomizing truth or the criterion of reality—is projected through the use of mobile phones and computers that immerse us in virtuality and turn it into a criterion of reality (Baricco 2019). What we once did is repeated not by our choice but because the algorithm presents it as a desired alternative. This leads us to think that devices possess a certain capacity for agency (Foladori 2001) and influence over our thought and behavior; this interaction suggests that subjective mind and objective reality are not merely intertwined—they are the same.

Another outcome of the new scopic order that becomes visible is the lack of necessity for complete theoretical paradigms, replaced instead by fragments expressed through memes, images, or summaries constructed as "fired-off" truths in texts without context. These atomized truths do not seek truth, but rather the approval. In this game, the possibility of looking at the sufferer is lost, because the goal is not to help but to stand out; not to support the vulnerable, but to gain visibility in a world determined to occlude those in need.

In this article, I have followed the trail of Orwellian fiction in *1984*. I have regarded that narrative as realist fiction to reflect on certain coincidences with the contemporary world of the year 2026. Lukács argues that realist fiction has the virtue of addressing social reality as a totality (2010). For this reason, rather than adopting the stance of a mere reader of reality, I used Orwell's novel to articulate components of our contemporaneity. While it cannot be claimed that the totalitarian social world imagined in the novel can be directly mapped onto the present, there are several coincidences with contemporary resonance—such as

modern surveillance, which, although neither constant nor omnipresent, is diffuse (Alev and Kocadaf 2019); that is, it exists in algorithmic form, ready to be deployed at any moment. The sense of being surveilled through mobile phone screens has come to stay within this new cultural framework emerging from the individualized or personalized use of technology. This diffuse surveillance might well be called digital, artificial, or algorithmic.

Likewise, contemporary disinformation is relevant insofar as it characterizes a society that, by editing truth under the pretense of safeguarding interests, excludes from its logic the vision of what is human—that is, what truly matters: people. To change history is to dominate memory and, with it, the possibility of the moral subject. For this reason, contemporary society is constructing a scopic system that defines who may be seen and who may not, who is inside and who is outside. Within this logic, recognition by the algorithm is more valuable than recognition by people. Social networks are steering us toward an irrationality in which people no longer hold the same importance as investments, technology, money, or energy resources. It becomes more important to accumulate likes on social networks than to show solidarity with the vulnerable. This phenomenon—characteristic of a time in which technology has become the key mediator of social relations—is what I call *communication without communion*.

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